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E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/19/2020
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [IZ](#) [IR](#) [SW](#)
SUBJECT: IRAQ ELECTION COMMISSION TELLS SWEDES OF PRESSURE
TO CUT NAMES FROM ELECTORAL LISTS

REF: 01/15/10 SELINGER-KOEHLER EMAIL

Classified By: DCM Robert Silverman for reasons 1(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Swedish Ambassador to Iraq Niclas Trouve spoke over the weekend with Faraj al-Haidari, the head of Iraq's Independent High Electoral Commission, to express concern over last week's announcement that some 500 candidates for the March 7 parliamentary elections would be banned from participation. During a January 19 call to Pol Counselor, Robert Rydberg, MFA Director General for Middle Eastern and North African Affairs, noted that Trouve had cautioned al-Haidari that preventing a large number of candidates from running "could put into question the legitimacy of the elections and complicate the process of reconciliation."

¶2. (C) Al-Haidari reportedly told the Swedish ambassador that the Independent Election Commission had come under considerable "political pressure" from the Iraqi government and had resisted initial demands that some 1000 candidates be barred. Stressing that he was offering his personal opinions, al-Haidari reportedly said he did not think party lists should be scrubbed of Baathists. Rydberg said Ambassador Trouve also offered his assessment that the Iraqi government will continue discussions internally and that there will be some "political compromise" in the near future regarding the electoral lists.

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